



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Your Success Story and Lessons Learned

Making it Safe to Walk to School

Intervention Summary

The challenge faced in our community was the lack of infrastructure needed to safely walk to school at Oakdale Heights Elementary School. Oakdale Heights Elementary School is located within a residential neighborhood with close proximity to high traffic areas and a high school campus on the same street with teen drivers. Sidewalks started and stopped around the school and most walking areas were unmaintained shoulders. There were not crosswalks at all of the intersections and it was not always possible to walk facing traffic. With the elementary school, high school, and middle school bus stop all on the same road, traffic is very busy and fast moving in the morning hours. However, several students walk or bike to school as well as the middle school bus stop. Butte County Public Health Department has a long history of working with Oakdale Heights Elementary School to promote safe walking and biking to school with events such as bike rodeos and Walk to School Days. The Health Department worked with Oakdale Heights to administer a parent survey regarding walking to school and it was determined that traffic was the main reason students did not walk. The Public Health Department teamed up with the Public Works Department and received a Safe Routes to School grant to address the issues around Oakdale Heights. Several agencies supported this effort, including the school and the California Highway Patrol, who is often present for Walk to School Day. The grant was received and this summer (2015) the infrastructure was completed at the site. There are now complete sidewalks on the street, crosswalks at all of the intersections around the school, and driver feedback signs. The grant also provided money for the students to be educated on how to walk safely, which will take place this school year. The Public Health Department and Public Works have applied for a second Safe Routes to School grant which would complete the sidewalks for the entire street, connecting the elementary and high schools as well as the main road connecting to the street.

Before



After



Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

The barrier encountered was delay of construction. There were power lines and other work that had to be done before Public Works could put in the sidewalks. Construction was completed during the summer months when school was out of session so the delay pushed construction back an entire year. Other barriers have been encountered at other

sites in not receiving Safe Routes to School funding. We believe that the strong history of a relationship between Public Health and the school as well as other efforts taking place at the school, including the strong presence of UC CalFresh, and the support of multiple agencies helped to overcome the funding barrier for this location.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Our goal with this project is to increase the number of students walking and biking to school in both the short and long term. Over the next year, we will provide support to the education taking place within the school as well as Walk to School events. Public Health's Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health program, California Highway Patrol, UC CalFresh, and the school administration are prepared to continue to support these efforts. Our long term goal is to support our partners in securing future funding to expand the infrastructure and education to surrounding schools.

Contact information about this Narrative

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